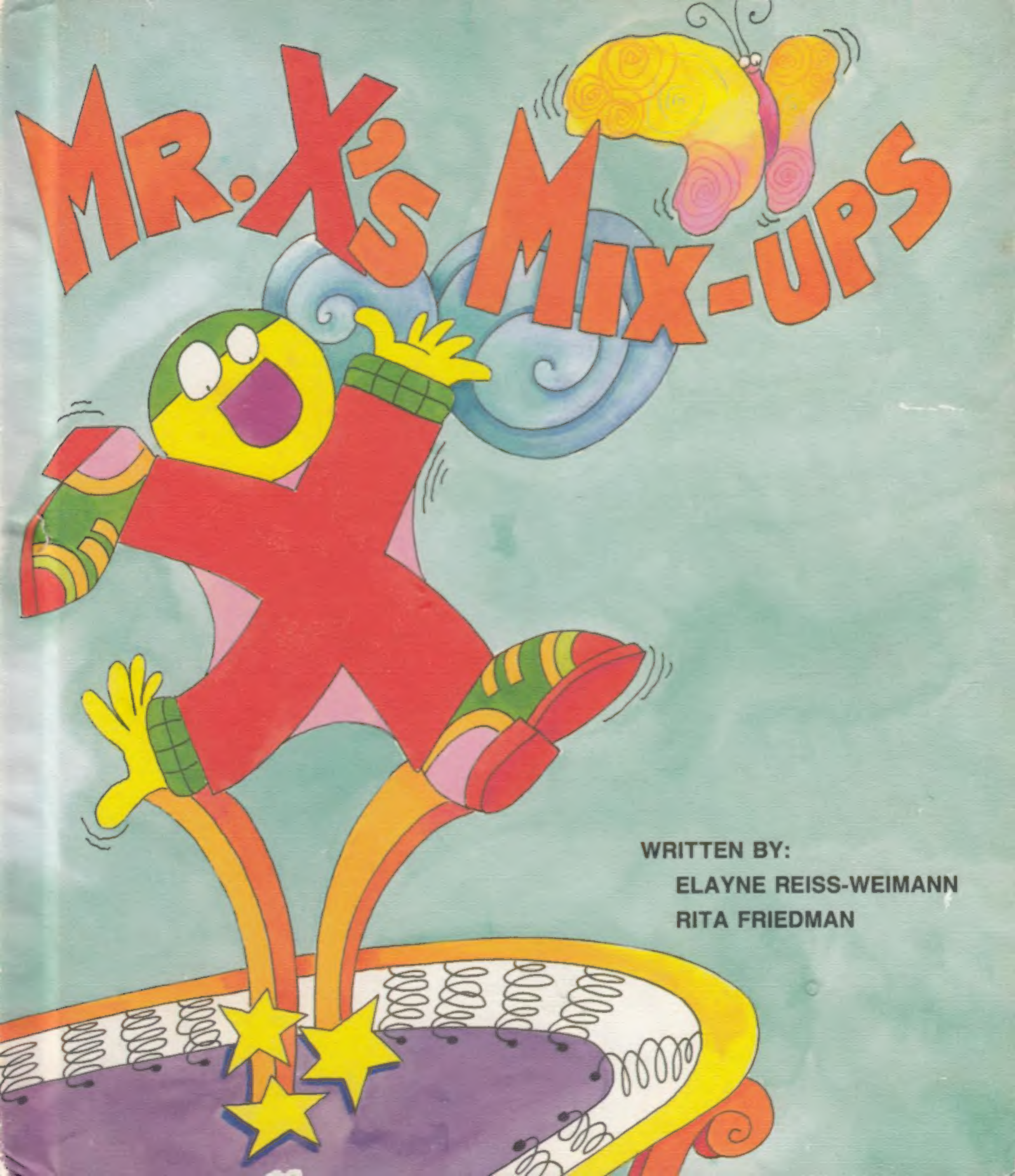


# MR. X'S MIX-UPS



WRITTEN BY:

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RITA FRIEDMAN



Mr. X is very excited.

Today he starts a new job.

He will work at Mrs. Xavier's Department Store.

Mr. X rushes to the store.

Mrs. Xavier is waiting for him at the front door.



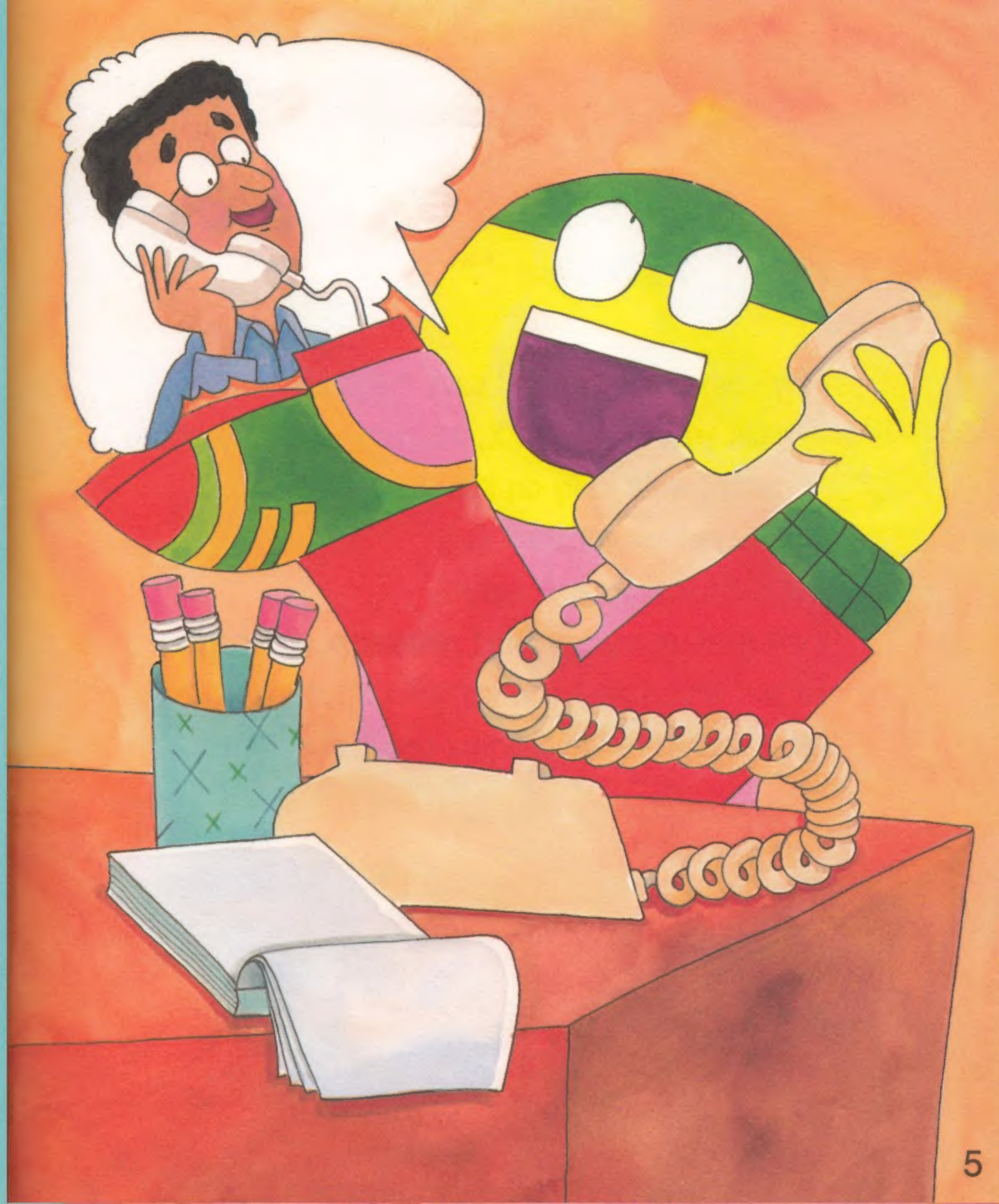


“Good morning, Mr. X,” says Mrs. Xavier.  
“Today I have to stay in the sporting goods department.  
I need you to answer the telephone in my office.  
Write the name of any callers on the message pad.  
That will give you a chance to get your feet wet.”  
“I understand about answering the telephone,  
but I am wearing new shoes,” says Mr. X.  
“Do I have to get my feet wet?”  
“ ‘Getting your feet wet’ is just another way of saying  
you’ll be starting your new job,” explains Mrs. Xavier.  
“Oh!” says Mr. X, “that’s not so easy to understand.”





Mr. X stays in Mrs. Xavier's office.  
He sits and watches the telephone.  
Finally the telephone rings.  
"Hello," says Mr. X, "this is Mr. X.  
I answer Mrs. Xavier's telephone.  
I am getting my feet wet,  
even though they are really dry.  
Please tell me your name.  
I will write it on my pad."





“My name is Mr. Kelly,” says the caller.  
“Thank you,” says Mr. X, hanging up the telephone.  
“I cannot write Kelly on the pad,” thinks Mr. X,  
“because I cannot spell Kelly.  
But Kelly rhymes with belly.  
I will think of my belly and remember Mr. Kelly.  
I’ll find Mrs. Xavier and tell her who called.”  
Mr. X rushes to the sporting goods department.





Instead of finding Mrs. Xavier,  
Mr. X jumps up and down on a trampoline.  
“Mr. X, why aren’t you in my office?”  
asks Mrs. Xavier.  
“I came to tell you who just called,” explains Mr. X.  
“Did you write the person’s name on the pad?”  
asks Mrs. Xavier.  
“I am not good at spelling names,” says Mr. X.  
“But I am good at remembering rhymes.  
All I have to do is think of my ... my ... my tummy!  
Tummy.....Gummy.....  
A man named Mr. Gummy just called you,”  
smiles Mr. X.





“What is Mr. Gummy’s telephone number?”  
asks Mrs. Xavier.

“You didn’t tell me to ask for a telephone number,”  
says Mr. X.

“Mr. X, don’t get upset,” says Mrs. Xavier kindly.

“It takes time to learn a new job.

Just roll up your sleeves and try again.”

“Do I have to roll up my sleeves?” asks Mr. X.

“I don’t have any sleeves to roll up.”

“No, ‘roll up your sleeves’ is just another way  
of saying you are really working hard at a job,”  
explains Mrs. Xavier.

“Oh,” says Mr. X, “that’s not so easy to understand.”





As soon as Mr. X returns to the office  
the telephone rings.  
“Hello,” says Mr. X, “this is Mr. X.  
I am getting my feet wet,  
even though they are really dry.  
I am rolling up my sleeves,  
even though I have no sleeves to roll up.  
Please tell me your telephone number.  
I will write it on my pad.”





“My telephone number is 555-7632,” says the caller.  
“Thank you,” says Mr. X, hanging up the telephone.  
Mr. X starts to write the numerals on his pad of paper.  
He can only write very large numerals.  
Only one numeral can fit on each piece of paper.  
He piles all the papers together.  
“I’ll find Mrs. Xavier and give these papers to her.  
Then she can call him back,” thinks Mr. X.  
Mr. X rushes to the sporting goods department.





This time Mr. X gets on an exercise bicycle.  
After a while, Mrs. Xavier sees Mr. X.  
“Mr. X, why aren’t you in my office?” asks Mrs. Xavier.  
“I came to give you a telephone number,” smiles Mr. X.  
Mr. X trips as he gets off the exercise bicycle.  
The papers fly everywhere.  
Mr. X picks them up and hands them to Mrs. Xavier.  
“These are all the numerals in the telephone number,”  
smiles Mr. X.  
“Oh,” says Mrs. Xavier, “which numeral comes first?  
Which numeral comes second?”  
“I don’t know,” says Mr. X softly.





“Tell me the caller’s name,” says Mrs. Xavier.

“I will find the telephone number  
in the telephone book.”

“You didn’t tell me to ask for the caller’s name,  
just the telephone number,” sighs Mr. X.

“Why do you keep changing your mind?

When I told you a caller’s name,  
you wanted the telephone number.

Now I give you the caller’s telephone number,  
and you want the name.

Is there anything else I should know about answering  
the telephone?” asks Mr. X.





“Yes, Mr. X,” says Mrs. Xavier, “please write down the messages the callers give you.

Put on your thinking cap and you’ll do a good job.”

“I don’t have a thinking cap,” says Mr. X.

“Do you sell them in the store?”

“Mr. X, you’re getting mixed-up again,” smiles Mrs. Xavier.

“ ‘Put on your thinking cap’ is another way of saying you must really think hard about what you are doing.”

“Oh,” says Mr. X, “that’s not so easy to understand.”

Mr. X goes back to Mrs. Xavier’s office.



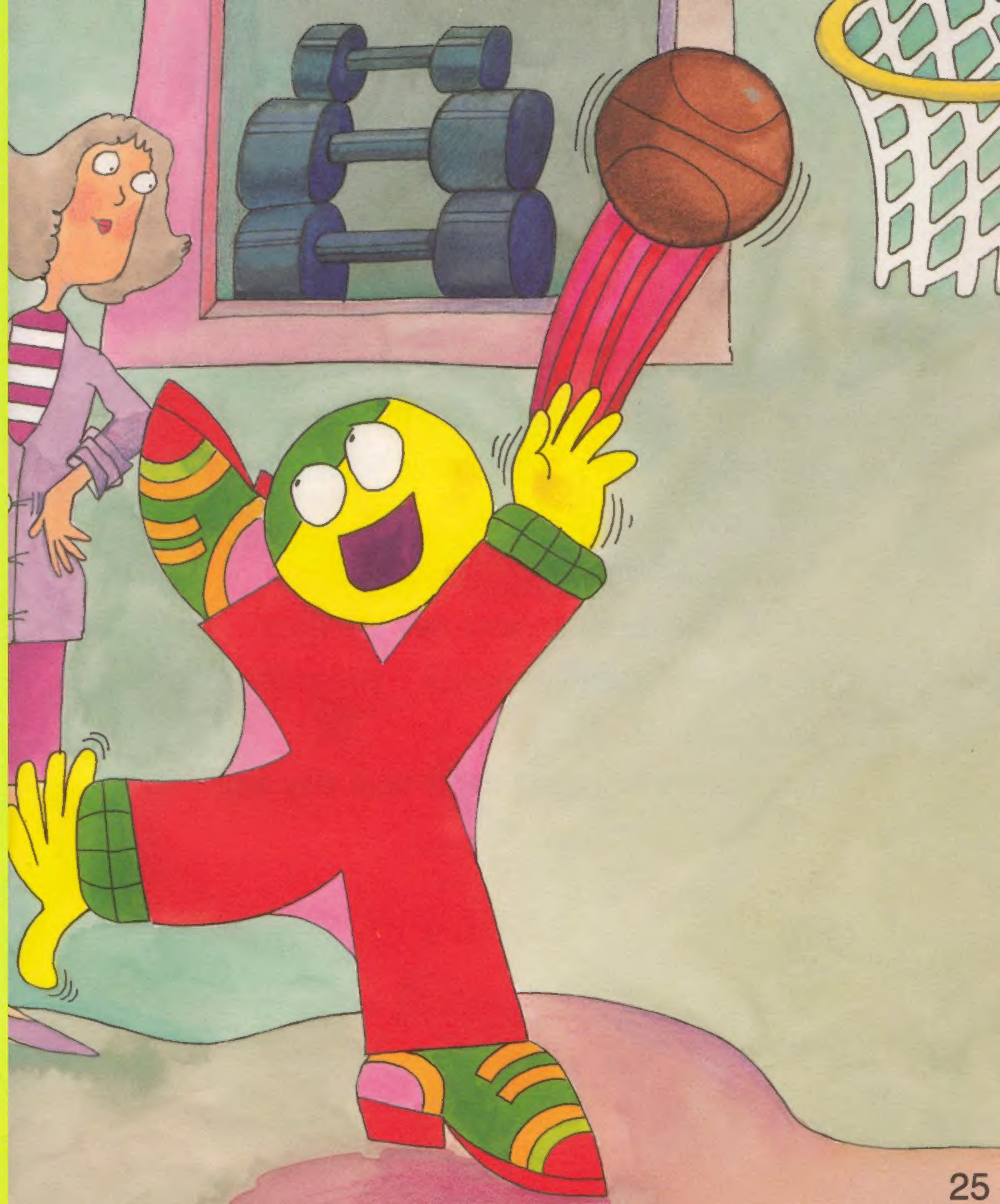


Soon the telephone rings again.  
“Hello, this is Mr. X,” says Mr. X.  
“My feet are not wet.  
My sleeves are not rolled up.  
And I am not wearing a cap.  
But I can take a message for Mrs. Xavier.”  
“Please tell Mrs. Xavier to attend a meeting  
tomorrow morning at ten o’clock,” says the caller.  
“Let me tell you my name and telephone number.”  
“Oh, no!” says Mr. X.  
“I only need a message.  
Goodbye!”  
Mr. X rushes to the sporting goods department again.





This time Mr. X sees a basketball hoop and a basketball. He is shooting baskets when he sees Mrs. Xavier. "Mrs. Xavier, I have a message for you," says Mr. X. He tells Mrs. Xavier the message. "Mr. X, now please tell me the name and telephone number of the caller," says Mrs. Xavier. "Why do you keep changing your mind?" asks Mr. X. "When I asked for the caller's name, you wanted the caller's telephone number. When I wrote down the telephone number, you said you wanted a message. Now I give you a message, and you say you want a name, a telephone number, *and* a message."





“Mr. X, don’t get upset,” says Mrs. Xavier kindly.

“Today is your first day doing this job.

You probably have butterflies in your stomach.”

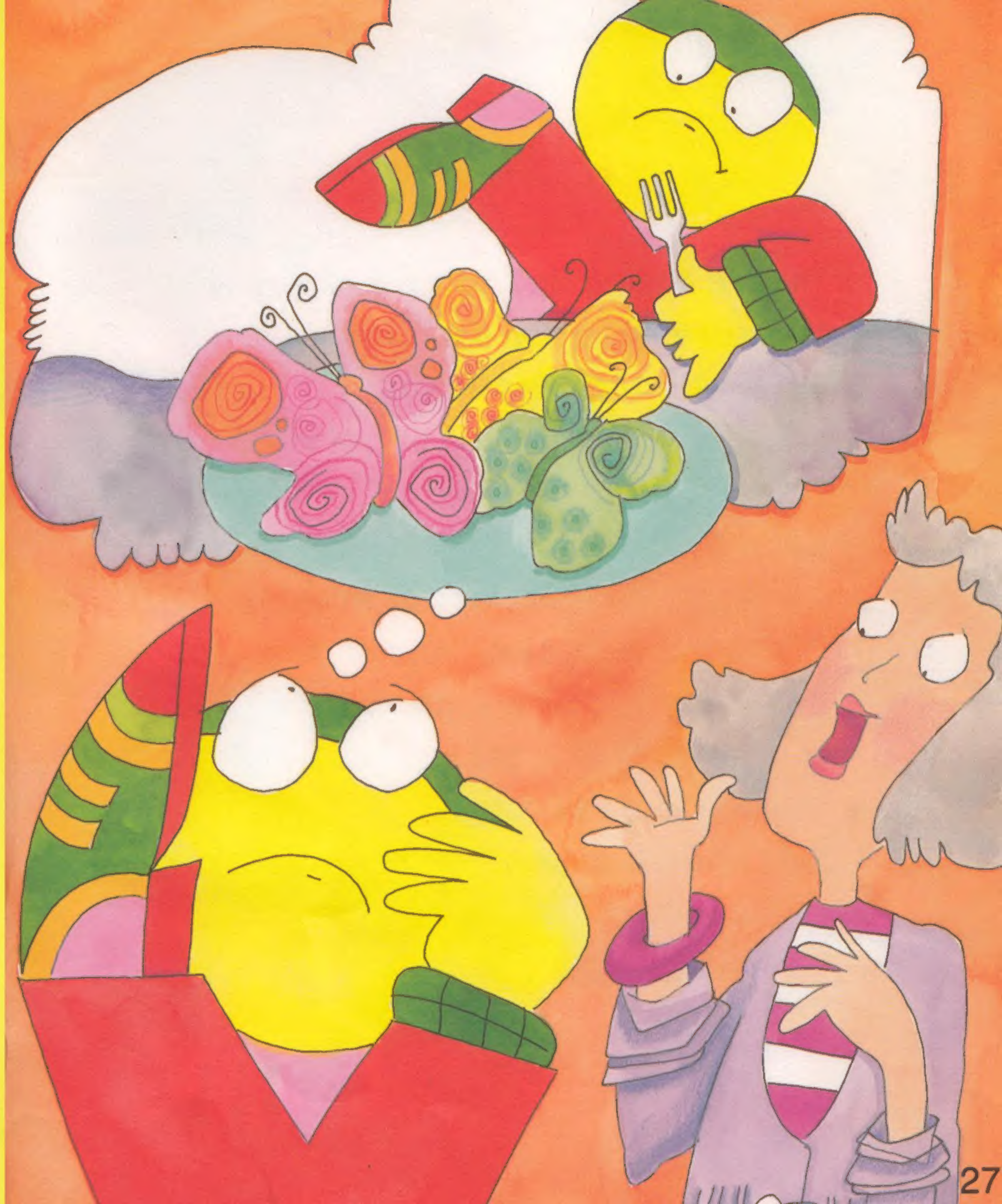
“No, I don’t,” says Mr. X.

“I never eat butterflies.”

“Mr. X, that is just another way of saying  
that you are probably nervous,” smiles Mrs. Xavier.

“Oh,” sighs Mr. X,

“more words that don’t mean what they say.”





The next morning Mr. X gets to work very early.  
He prepares to surprise Mrs. Xavier.  
After a while Mrs. Xavier arrives.  
“Mr. X, why are your feet in pails of water?” she says.  
“Why are your sleeves rolled up?  
Why are you wearing a cap?  
And why are butterflies flying all around the room?”  
“I want to do a good job,” says Mr. X.  
“Yesterday you told me to get my feet wet,  
to roll up my sleeves, and to put on a thinking cap.  
So that is what I am doing.  
But I have one problem.”





“Mrs. Xavier, is it all right  
if the butterflies fly around the room?  
I don’t want them in my stomach.”

Mrs. Xavier gives Mr. X a big hug.

“You may get things mixed-up, but you always make  
an extra-special effort to do a good job,” she says.

